

# Strategy 2030



THE UNIVERSITY  
*of* EDINBURGH



[www.ed.ac.uk/strategy-2030](http://www.ed.ac.uk/strategy-2030)



I am delighted to share our strategy for the next decade. On the following pages we have outlined our plans for the future, and you will see that our direction is led by a distinctive, honest and realistic set of guiding principles and goals.

Our vision to continue delivering excellence to 2030 and beyond is rooted in our values, with a focus on four key areas: people, research, teaching and learning, and social and civic responsibility.

In learning about our bold strategy for the future, I hope you will be inspired to join our efforts and help us to bring these plans to fruition.

**Professor Peter Mathieson**  
Principal and Vice-Chancellor

# Our vision

Our graduates, and the knowledge we discover with our partners, make the world a better place.



# Our purpose

As a world-leading research-intensive University, we are here to address tomorrow's greatest challenges. Between now and 2030 we will do that with a values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation, and through the strength of our relationships, both locally and globally.



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**29%**

The proportion of our staff who are from outside the UK

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**19**

The number of Nobel Prize winners among our staff, students and alumni

# Our values

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We aim to achieve excellence in all that we do, always being principled, considerate and respectful.



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Our teaching and research is relevant to society and we are diverse, inclusive and accessible to all.



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We are ambitious, bold and act with integrity, always being willing to listen.





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We foster a welcoming community, where staff, students, alumni and friends feel proud to be part of our University.



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We celebrate and strengthen our deep-rooted and distinctive internationalism, attracting the world's best minds and building innovative global partnerships for research, teaching and impact.



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We sustain a deep allegiance and commitment to the interests of the city and region in which we are based, alongside our national and international efforts, ensuring relevance to all.

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We are a place of transformation and of self-improvement, driven to achieve benefit for individuals, communities, societies and our world.



# Our University, then and now

Founded by the city of Edinburgh in 1583, we were the first true civic university in the UK and one of the four ancient universities of Scotland.

Our predecessors played a central role in establishing Edinburgh as the chief intellectual centre of the Age of Enlightenment.

Our collegial and collaborative approach established entirely new subject areas from geology to epigenetics. Since that time, we have made significant and sustained contributions to a huge range of societal challenges. We have worked to tackle malaria and diabetes and helped improve youth justice. We have contributed to work on global sustainable development and the use of solar power to give displaced communities in camps access to mobile communication.

Members of our community go on to benefit society as engineers, teachers, social entrepreneurs, artists, medics and agents of change. We are the home of Britain's oldest literary awards, the James Tait Black Prizes, and of Dolly the sheep. Chrystal Macmillan, suffragist and founder of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, was our first female science graduate in 1896.







In 2013, our Emeritus Professor, theoretical physicist Peter Higgs, was jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics for his 1964 prediction of the Higgs Boson.

Our world is faced with a variety of significant and complex challenges, from rising inequality and the mass displacement of people, to climate change and the emergence of artificial intelligence. Established ways of thinking must be challenged, and as a university we are reflecting on what needs to change (and what does not) as we move forward.

To respond to these challenges and do justice to future generations, we need to adapt and work in new ways. We will work through new partnerships with local authorities, third sector, and business, both nationally and internationally.

This is a strategy for the next decade. In a fast-changing world it is difficult to plan much further ahead than that. By focusing on our values, on the civic purpose for which we were founded, and the changes we want to deliver, we can provide a rationale for the University's future, and financial sustainability.

We have more than 400 years of excellence behind us. Working together, we can lay the foundations to make the next 400 years even better.

# Our focus

To make the greatest impact we will focus on four key areas, each shaped by our values.



People

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Research

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Teaching and Learning

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Social and Civic Responsibility





# People

Our students, staff, alumni and friends are our lifeblood.

We will continue to welcome and bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, both close to home and across the globe.

We will encourage and take care of one another. We will provide support in times of difficulty and celebrate every success. We will build relationships that are mutually beneficial, long-lasting and constructive.

We will value the contribution of every individual, regardless of whether they are students, staff, alumni or other contributors. We will support each other's development and career progress.

We will set an example for others by conducting ourselves with integrity, transparency, honesty and clarity at all times. We will always value and protect freedom of expression, while respecting the boundaries dictated by law, decency, ethics and respect for others.

We will be open to change to best support our academic mission and ensure we have policies and procedures that are people-focused, efficient and effective.

Our **Service Excellence Programme** will make the University an even better place to study and work. It will make it easier for students to join and study with us, make life easier for staff, and help reduce costs so we can focus investment in other important areas.

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**“The key tenets of the project are making things simple and efficient, making all of our lives easier.”**

**Ellie Dora,**  
Assistant Human Resources Adviser





# Research

Our ethos of working without boundaries will deliver a step change in innovation and research.



The University's student **HYPED society** includes more than 200 students from various academic disciplines. Together they share a vision to accelerate the development of Sir Richard Branson and Elon Musk's Hyperloop and implement the technology in the UK.

**“There are a lot of really ambitious students at Edinburgh, and at HYPED we are working together to try to do something interesting for our careers and the wellbeing of the world.”**

**Adam Anyszewski,**  
HYPED President 2018

We will strengthen our ability to generate new knowledge through primary research and provide ever better education and training for exceptional early career researchers. We will be the catalyst for new industry programmes and businesses that deliver benefit to societies around the world.

We will do all of this while being critically aware of the ethical, legal and regulatory responsibilities of research. We will openly communicate our research findings to the public, governments and funding agencies.

We will strive to make our research even more interdisciplinary and international, to address social and global challenges including the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

We will create initiatives in a variety of areas including justice, data science, environmental sustainability, mental health and wellbeing, ageing and dementia, human rights, and global governance, driven by new collaborative research communities. Working in open facilities, researchers, students, the public sector and companies will 'breathe the same air' and solve major challenges side by side.





# Teaching and Learning

Our teaching will match the excellence of our research.  
We will improve and sustain student satisfaction and wellbeing.



Complex problems are rarely addressed from a single perspective, so we have created a radically different space as a home for shared thinking, teaching and action. At the **Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI)** we will collaborate across disciplines. We will work with communities, businesses, non-government organisations, governments and other universities to plan for the future, and find ways to tackle the needs of our society.

**“In judging the success of EFI over time we will need to ask whether it has led to a transformation in terms of inclusive economic growth and social benefit. It needs to make a genuine difference.”**

**Professor Lesley McAra,**  
Director of the Edinburgh Futures Institute

We will support and promote teaching that focuses on experience, employability and an understanding of the value of creativity, curiosity, and even failure. We will encourage discussion and engagement with staff, students and partners.

We celebrate our students making the world a better place. We will keep attracting and retaining ambitious students, maximising their potential to ensure that our graduates go on to achieve success in whatever they do, wherever they go.

We will widen participation so that students from any background can come to study with us. We will offer accessible, responsive and efficient educational services as well as personal, pastoral and professional support. We will also encourage a culture of life-long learning and attachment to our University community, letting every student know how much we value them, from the first time we meet them, to their graduation and for the rest of their lives.

We will not grow for growth's sake. We will improve our student experience while aiming to keep our undergraduate community at a stable size. In reshaping our teaching for the future, we expect to expand interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, postgraduate and digital education.





# Social and Civic Responsibility

Our vision is to make the world a better place, so we will ensure that our actions and activities deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally.

Small changes to the way we work can make a big difference. We are going to reduce our climate impact, and buy locally when we can. We are going to support volunteering, build public engagement, and be a good and welcoming neighbour.

We can also make a difference to individuals and communities in a number of ways; from tackling climate change, global justice and water safety to sustainable food production, information security and the impacts of rare diseases.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals provide a meaningful and comprehensive manifesto to which we will contribute.

Our integral role in the Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal is part of our civic responsibility. We are collaborating with local schools, colleges and universities, public authorities, industrial and business partners, and governments, to support the City Region Deal's ambition for Data-Driven Innovation and inclusive growth.

Working with partners, attracting investment, fuelling entrepreneurship and delivering inclusive growth are our City Region Deal aims.

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**“We are finding innovative ways to use machine learning and artificial intelligence to solve global problems, with a focus on ethics in order to progress our excellence in this field and, ‘do data right’. It is about helping people and businesses to build skills and jobs.”**

**Jarmo Eskelinen,**  
Director, Data-Driven Innovation Programme



# Our University in 2030

By 2030 we will be able to demonstrate the success of our strategy in the following ways:



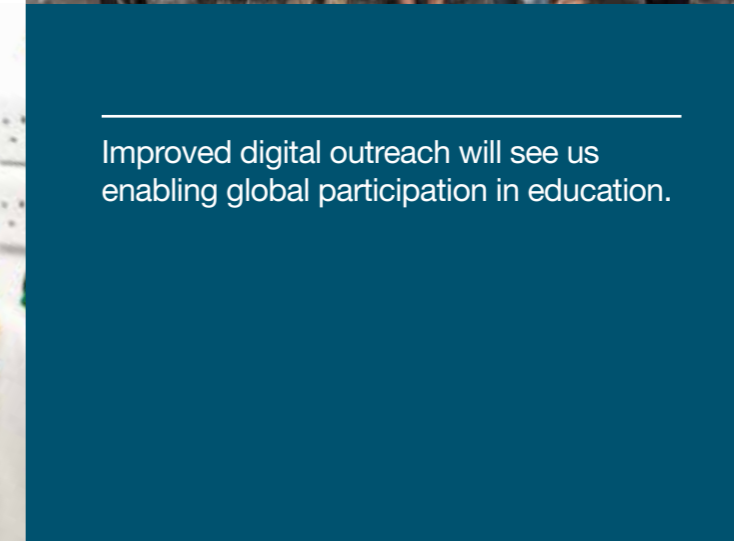
The undergraduate curriculum will support breadth and choice, preparing students, graduates and alumni to make a difference in whatever they do, wherever they do it.



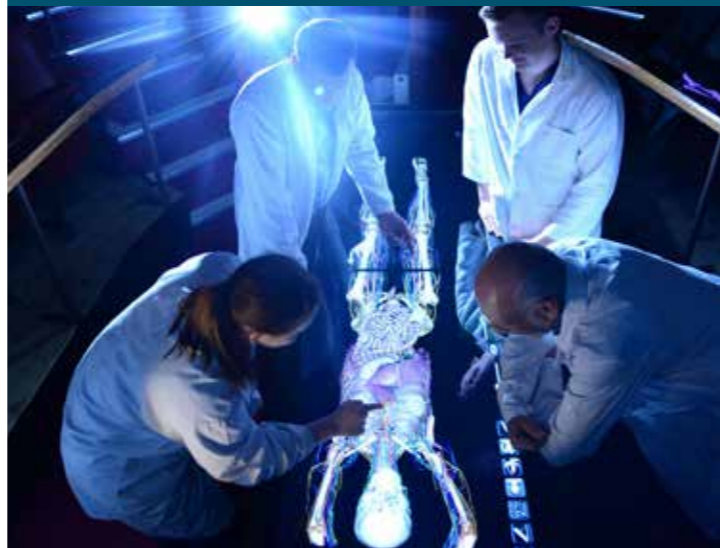
We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.



We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.



Improved digital outreach will see us enabling global participation in education.



We will be a global leader in artificial intelligence and the use of data with integrity.



We will be a destination of choice, based on our clear "Edinburgh Offer". All of our staff and students will develop here, whether they are from Leith, Lisbon, Lahore or Lilongwe.



Edinburgh will become the Data Capital of Europe. We will deliver inclusive growth, provide data skills to at least 100,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges.



We will be on track to be a Carbon-Zero University by 2040.



We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.



We will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.



Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.



We will have more user-friendly processes and efficient systems to support our work.



Multidisciplinary postgraduate education pathways will support flexible whole-life learning.







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Play your part  
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This publication is available online at the URL above.  
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**Published by:**  
Communications and Marketing, The University of Edinburgh

**Printed by:**  
J Thomson Colour Printers

**Cover photography:**  
Paul Dodds

**Additional photography:**  
Allan Shedlock Photography, Bennetts Associates,  
Chris Close, Gordon Burniston, Herald & Times Group,  
Lesley Martin, Mihaela Bodlovic, Paul Dodds, Peter Tuffy,  
Sam Sills, Stuart Edwards, The University of Edinburgh, Yao Hui.

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Thank you to all staff and students who helped in the production  
of this publication.

The University of Edinburgh is a charitable body, registered  
in Scotland, with registration number SC005336.